



DEREK S.K. KAWAKAMI, MAYOR
MICHAEL A. DAHLIG, MANAGING DIRECTOR

News Release

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COUNTY OF KAUA'I
KAUA'I FIRE DEPARTMENT
MICHAEL GIBSON, CHIEF
(808) 241-4980

First responders conduct multiple ocean rescues during High Surf Warning Thursday

On Thursday, first responders conducted multiple ocean rescues at Queen's Bath and Anini Beach during a High Surf Warning.

"Six individuals rescued on Thursday are fortunate to be alive," said Fire Chief Michael Gibson. "Swimming and snorkeling during a High Surf Warning and trespassing at Queen's Bath, known for its hazardous ocean conditions, are extremely unwise, and put our first responders at tremendous risk. We advise beachgoers to swim at lifeguarded beaches, check with lifeguards on ocean conditions before entering the water, and avoid areas that are closed off and pose a danger."

First responders responded to the first incident at approximately 11:30 a.m. involving two distressed snorkelers in waters off Anini Beach – a male visitor from Vancouver, Washington, and a male resident of Wailua.

Personnel with the Hanalei fire station, the Ocean Safety Bureau North Roving Ski Patrol, and a local surfer with a rescue tube responded to the incident.

According to a preliminary report, first responders arrived on scene at approximately 11:35 a.m. and observed large, 12-foot surf near Anini Beach. Lifeguards with the North Roving Ski Patrol initially located one snorkeler. A local surfer with a rescue tube alerted firefighters on paddle boards of a second individual who also needed assistance. North Roving Ski found the second individual, approximately 1/3 of a mile offshore, outside of large surf.

Both snorkelers declined medical treatment.

The scene was cleared at approximately 12:20 p.m.

The second rescue was conducted at Queen's Bath in Princeville and involved four visitors from Texas, Wisconsin, Mississippi, and Florida.

Shortly after 1:30 p.m., first responders were dispatched to search for individuals near Queen's Bath.

Personnel with the Hanalei fire station, Rescue 3, Air 1, and American Medical Response responded to the incident.

According to a preliminary report, first responders arrived on scene at approximately 1:40 p.m. and observed large, 12-foot surf. First responders located four individuals sheltering against the cliff by Queen's Bath, with two incurring injuries. One had minor leg injuries, while the other suffered multiple non-life-threatening injuries.

Shortly after, three individuals were escorted by a rescuer to safety and later refused medical treatment. The visitor with more severe injuries was extracted by Rescue 3 aboard Air 1 to awaiting medics. AMR personnel continued medical treatment on the individual before transporting him to Wilcox Medical Center.

The scene was cleared shortly after 2:50 p.m.

Since October, access to Queen's Bath has been closed through winter in the interest of public safety.

The National Weather Service issued a High Surf Warning for north- and west-facing shores on Thursday afternoon in effect through Friday morning, and a High Surf Advisory through 6 a.m. Saturday.

Entering the water in these areas during the High Surf Warning and High Surf Advisory is very hazardous and could cause serious injury or death. Beachgoers are also advised to use extreme caution, as large breaking waves could make it dangerous for those standing along the shoreline.

The warning and advisory may be extended or modified as conditions develop. For updated information on ocean and weather alerts, visit the NWS website, www.weather.gov/hfo.

For up-to-date information about Kaua'i ocean conditions and ocean safety, please speak to a county lifeguard at any lifeguard station, visit www.hawaiibeachsafety.com, or call the Ocean Safety Bureau at 808-241-4984.

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